



Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

7 questions	18 questions	20 questions	12 questions	15 questions	1 question
Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development	Reading Comprehension	Literary Response and Analysis	Writing Strategies	Written and Oral English Language Conventions	Writing Applications

These are the 2 CAHSEE Word Analysis Standards.

The CAHSEE uses 7 multiple-choice questions to measure these standards. There is no magic list of words that will appear on the test, so this section of the Study Guide discusses some of the strategies that can help you succeed.

You will be asked to explain what a particular word or phrase means. The CAHSEE measures your understanding of both denotation (the dictionary definition) and connotation (the image or feeling that a word or phrase suggests to readers). For example, *house* and *home* have the same denotation: both describe a place of shelter. However, their connotations are quite different. *House* makes most readers think of particular buildings where people live; *home* suggests warmth, comfort, and safety.

If you are not already familiar with a word or phrase in a test question, you will need to apply skills and strategies such as gathering meaning from context or using your knowledge of word origins, roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

These passages and questions are from a previous version of the CAHSEE. Read each passage and answer each question. After each question, a strategy is provided to help you practice your word analysis skills.

10RW1.1 Identify and use the literal and figurative meanings of words and understand word derivations. [5 questions]

10RW1.2 Distinguish between the denotative and connotative meanings of words and interpret the connotative power of words. [2 questions]

Word Analysis

Read this passage from a previous CAHSEE administration and the discussion and question that follow.



The Piano Lesson

- 1 I walked up the front stoop to the porch of Mrs. Windsor's house and waited outside as I always did when I heard the piano. That meant she was working with another student, and I was not supposed to disturb them by ringing the bell. I leaned against the rough brick exterior and daydreamed about what I'd rather be doing. "Almost anything," I sighed dejectedly. I had been tutored enough to read, understand, and even write some musical compositions, but I just didn't have a flair for it. It didn't come to me naturally. I thought back to happier times when I was writing stories and acting them out with my friends, cutting up old clothes and rags to make costumes, and building props and scenery out of old junk we found. But Mrs. Windsor had offered to give me the lessons for free, so I felt obligated to try.
- 2 The door opened and Wendy Barton stood there with her sheet music tucked under her arm. She wrinkled her nose at me and whisked by. I guess she thought mediocre piano playing might be contagious.
- 3 I walked into Mrs. Windsor's music room, sat down on the piano bench, and began to sort through my sheet music.
- 4 "Hello," I heard a voice behind me say softly. I turned around to see a petite girl standing behind me, eating an apple.
- 5 "Want one?" she offered.
- 6 "No, thanks, I don't want to get the keys all sticky. Mrs. Windsor wouldn't like that." I pointed to the polished piano in front of me. "But thanks, anyway."
- 7 "What's your name?" she asked.
- 8 But before I could answer, Mrs. Windsor bustled into the room in her usual urgent manner and announced, "Jennifer, this is my niece, Pasha. Pasha, this is Jennifer. Pasha will be giving you your lesson today. I'm up to my ears in plumbers! There will be no charge, as usual, just good practice." Her voice trailed off as she exited to the kitchen.
- 9 Pasha set her apple down on the side table and slid beside me on the piano bench.
- 10 "What piece do you like the best?" she inquired.

- 11 “What do you mean?” I asked. “They’re all the same to me. I don’t know.”
- 12 “You mean you don’t have a favorite?”
- 13 “No, not really.”
- 14 Pasha looked at me, rather puzzled, then opened my sheet music to the beginning page and asked me to play. I arranged my fingers on the keys and studied the notes on the page for a moment. Then I furrowed my brow and concentrated to make the notes on the page match the finger movements. I have to admit I was a rather mechanical pianist.
- 15 After about a page or two, Pasha gently put her hand on top of mine as if to hush my fingers. There was a long pause. “Jennifer, what are you hearing in the music?”
- 16 I looked at her rather strangely and admitted I didn’t know what she meant.
- 17 “Like a story. What story is being played out within the music?”
- 18 “I guess I’ve never thought about it before. I don’t know.”
- 19 “Here, let me try and you listen,” Pasha instructed.
- 20 She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, letting her fingers dangle lightly over the keys. Then, she began to play. “See, it begins here beside some kind of river or brook. Hear the water trickling beside you?”
- 21 Her fingers rippled over some high melodic chain of chords. “Now the princess appears and she’s picking flowers from the water’s edge.” A carefree, happy tune filled the air in time to Pasha’s dancing fingers. “Oh, but she slips!” The music changed. “And our princess is being carried off by the roaring current. Quickly, the princess’s horse sees her plight,” Pasha continued dramatically, “and races to the river’s edge where he swims out to let her catch hold of his halter. They make it to the bank and she hugs her faithful horse and swears she will never again wear princess skirts of billowing layers and petticoats that weigh her down. She will only wear jeans and T-shirts from now on.” Pasha finished with a flourish and a mischievous grin and then looked at me.
- 22 “Aren’t you the girl who tells the stories?” she asked.
- 23 “I guess. I do tell a lot of stories.”
- 24 “Oh, yes! All the kids talk about them. I’ve heard about you.”
- 25 “Well, all you have to do is learn to hear the stories in the music. That’s all there is to it.”
- 26 “I’ve never thought of it that way.”
- 27 “Let’s try another one, shall we?” Pasha smiled and together we played that afternoon, finding the story in the music and learning that sometimes it takes a friend to pull you out of the river onto dry land again.

Sample CAHSEE question

Read this sentence from paragraph 14 of the passage.

I have to admit I was a rather
mechanical pianist.

The author’s use of the word *mechanical* suggests that Jennifer played the piano without—

- A** sheet music.
- B** proper practice.
- C** emotion.
- D** help.

Strategy

Be sure to read the question carefully. Paragraph 14 establishes that Jennifer *does* use sheet music, and proper practice and help are *not* the topics of this paragraph. Even if you did not know what “mechanical” implies, you have arrived at the correct answer by eliminating wrong options. This strategy will help you with many questions you encounter in the CAHSEE.

Read this passage from a previous CAHSEE administration and the discussion and question that follow.

Papier-Mâché Mobile Galaxy



This fun mobile is easy and economical to make; it adds color to any room. You can create many variations, depending on the colors of paper and the sizes of the balloons. You can name your “galaxy” any name you wish! Preparation: Place newspapers in your work area to catch drips of paste and make cleanup easy.

Materials needed:

six balloons	paintbrush
an empty jelly jar	floral wire (available at craft stores)
wheat paste (available at craft stores)	coat hanger
colored tissue paper or crêpe paper streamers	string, about 3 feet in length
scissors	clothespins

Instructions:

1. Blow up each balloon to the size you desire. Vary the sizes to make the mobile more interesting. Rest each balloon on the empty jar when you are ready to work on it.
2. Cut or tear the tissue paper or crêpe paper streamers into strips. Brush a small amount of wheat paste on the balloon. Apply the tissue paper, working vertically from the top of the balloon down toward the knot. Brush on a little more paste, and add another strip of paper, slightly overlapping the first. Continue to apply the strips of paper until the entire balloon is covered. Then add additional layers of paper. You will need about four layers of paper to ensure the stability of the ball.
3. Stretch the string between two chairs. Hang the paper-covered balloons on the string by the knot, using the clothespins. Drying will take several hours. After the paper is dry, hold the knot of the balloon and use the scissors to pop the balloon and remove the knot.
4. Cut six lengths of floral wire, varying the lengths between 6 inches and 12 inches. Thread about 1 ½ inches of the wire through the end of the ball opposite the opening for the balloon knot. Twist the end of the wire around itself to secure it. Attach the other end of the wire to the coat hanger, arranging each ball across the wire to achieve the effect desired.
5. Hang the mobile wherever you wish. It can brighten any part of a room, especially if hung near a sunny window. There the light can reflect off the colors.

31B

Sample CAHSEE question

Read this sentence from the instructions.

You can create many variations,
depending on the colors of paper
and the sizes of the balloons.

The word *variations* is based on the word vary, which means—

- A choose.
- B decide.
- C change.
- D build.

Strategy

Be sure to look for context clues. The instructions include a description of the possible product "...depending on the colors of paper and sizes of the balloons." Obviously the mobile's appearance depends on which color of paper and size of balloon one chooses.

For more practice on these types of questions, go to the Released Test Questions at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/resources.asp>.